

The Story Begins



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 12: November 26–December 2, 2016

Day 1

November 28



Pray | Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

THE STORY OF GOD points us to Jesus and the sacrifice he made for us on the cross. Similarly, the chapter of God's story chronicling Joseph's life can also point us to Jesus. Joseph was a man of God who enjoyed the favor of his earthly and heavenly fathers. He also endured hardship, both because of the actions of his father, Israel (Jacob), and because God used Joseph's suffering to carry out his plan.

It can be hard for us to understand and accept why God allows his children to suffer when he loves us so much. Some of us think that if we do or don't do certain things or grow our faith to a certain level that God will remove all the potential obstacles or hardships from our paths. Jesus is more deserving of an easy journey than anyone. If Jesus was allowed and chose to suffer and die for us, should we complain about the bumps in the road he lays before us?



Read | Genesis 37:3–11



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Joseph's brothers were very jealous of the preferential treatment he received from their father and hated him because of it. When Joseph shared his dreams that indicated he would someday rule over his brothers, they hated him even more. How do you respond when someone else is given something you wish you had?

John Wesley said that God gave Joseph the dreams mentioned in Genesis 11 to support and comfort him in the troubling times that were to come. Reflect back on your life. Has there ever been a circumstance that God allowed you to experience to prepare you for what was to come?

Though it isn't explicitly stated in the passage, it would seem that Joseph's brothers talked to each other about their feelings of jealousy and hatred toward their brother. Just as there can be a synergy when multiple people are working together to solve a problem or complete a project, in this situation the discontent was multiplied. Consider the people that you surround yourself with. Do they tend to have a positive or negative effect on your emotions and reactions to the situations you face in your everyday life?

Day 2

November 29



Pray / Your kingdom come, your will be done.

THE CONTINUING STORY of Joseph's life is again reminiscent of the life of Jesus. In today's passage we'll see Joseph stripped of his robe and sold as a slave by his brothers, the people who should have been closer to him and loved him more than any others. Jesus was similarly betrayed by one of his disciples for money, and another of his close followers denied him multiple times.

Just as an athlete prepares his or her body for the challenge of competition by physical training, Joseph was being trained for his future role by the challenges he faced. Though the way Joseph's brothers treated him was awful, it was part of God's plan to put him in place to save his family in the future.

Listen to Chris Tomlin's "Impossible Things" (<http://worship.com/2016/10/impossible-things-chris-tomlin-danny-gokey/>) as you continue.



Read / Genesis 37:23–28



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Just as an athlete trains for a game or challenge by strengthening his or her physical body, we should train ourselves spiritually for the challenges to come. Do you have a spiritual training plan/regimen that you utilize to grow closer to God and better serve him?

Joseph's brothers ignore the obvious issue when they throw Joseph into a pit and sell him as a slave rather than kill him themselves or, more constructively, deal with their feelings. They hated their brother so much that they couldn't stand the sight of him and would do virtually anything to rid him from their lives. Are there any "elephants" in your life that you need to acknowledge and ask God to help you deal with?

A picture of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 37:23–26 should be next to the definitions of *jealous* and *selfish* in the dictionary. While Joseph was stuck in a pit without his robe, his brothers sat down and ate and then discussed the merits of killing him versus selling him into slavery. Looking back at your life, have you ever exhibited behavior similar to that of Joseph's brothers?

Day 3

November 30



Pray / Thank God for his persistent pursuit.

IN MATTHEW 4 Jesus was tempted by the devil: The devil tempted Jesus with food, tempted him to test God, and also tempted him with power, but Jesus resisted every time and used the Word of God to respond.

In another parallel between Jesus and Joseph, we see Joseph being repeatedly propositioned by Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39. Joseph refused her repeatedly and told her why he wouldn't participate in the wicked act she proposed. As she continued to pursue him, Joseph refused to listen to her or be with her. Joseph was able to stand strong because God was with him.

Consider the words of Chris Tomlin's "Come Thou Fount" (at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9I_-ShgVBE) as you read and reflect on today's passage.



Read / Genesis 39:6b–10



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

In Genesis 39:7–10 Potiphar’s wife repeatedly asked Joseph to lie with her. To honor his God and master, Joseph refused to listen to her or be with her. How do you respond when you are repeatedly tempted to do something that you know is wrong?

Joseph gave a great testimony to Potiphar’s wife when he was asked to lie with her. He explained his place in the house and that lying with her would be a sin against God. When you decide not to do something that you know is wrong, do you explain your reasoning to those who are tempting you?

Adam and Eve were not able to resist the temptation to eat the one forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, but Joseph was able and willing to obey his master by refusing to lie with Potiphar’s wife, the one thing Potiphar kept from him. Do you tend to focus on the things you are lacking or on the blessings God has bestowed on you?

Day 4

December 1



Pray / Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

IN MATTHEW 26 Jesus was brought before Caiaphas and accused of being Christ, the Son of God. Though this was true, Jesus was found guilty and was put to death for claiming this truth.

In Genesis 39:11–18, Joseph finds himself in a similar position. As we saw in yesterday’s passage, he did everything he could to avoid Potiphar’s wife. She was determined to see him punished for refusing her and made up a story that put Joseph in the wrong.

Consider the words of Chris Tomlin’s “The God I Know” as you read today’s passage: “The God I know will make a way / Whatever comes, whatever I face / The God I know is strong enough to save / He is the Lord, he conquered the grave.”¹



Read / Genesis 39:11–18

1. Chris Tomlin, vocal performance of “The God I Know” by Jason Ingram, Chris Tomlin, and Ross Copperman, on *Never Lose Sight*, Six Steps/Sparrow Records, B01M0GWB3R, 2016, compact disc.



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

After being sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph is faithful to God and his master and has been given a place of honor in the house. Despite his faithfulness, he finds himself in the middle of a scandal. When you find yourself in a similar situation, do you blame or question God or ask the Lord, who conquered the grave, to make a way for you in his time?

It is clear that God was at the center of Joseph's life by his response to Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39:9 and by his show of strength of character in resisting her repeatedly. What have you done to ensure that you will be able to resist temptation when it comes your way?

Potiphar's wife is relentless in her pursuit of Joseph and eventually catches him in a position that she can use for her purpose and falsely accuse him. In our media-drive society, you may similarly be pursued by something that tempts you to sin. Take some time to give your struggle to God and ask him for strength if you find yourself in this position today.

Day 5

December 2



Pray / Thank God for forgiveness through his son, Jesus.

THOUGH JESUS WAS wrongly accused, convicted, and put to death, he defeated death and rose on the third day. Through it all, God suffered with and supported Jesus through his Spirit. Similarly, we've seen Joseph sold into slavery by his brothers and falsely accused. In today's reading, we'll see him thrown in prison. God did not abandon Joseph in his time of need. He was with Joseph in prison and helped him gain favor with the keeper and again be put in charge.

Though Joseph's situation seemed pretty dire, he served a God who can and does do impossible things and had a plan for his life. Sometimes these things cause his children to suffer for a period while we gain experience or strength for what is ahead. The amazing thing is that whatever God puts before us or wherever he has us go, he is right there beside us, just as he was with Joseph on his journey.



Read / Genesis 39:19–23



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

As soon as the master heard his wife's accusation against Joseph, he became angry and had him thrown into prison. When you find yourself in an encounter with someone, do you allow yourself to react emotionally, or do you take the time to listen to the Spirit and let him guide your response?

Joseph was put in charge of the prison, where he didn't deserve to be living, and found a way to serve God even in that seemingly dire situation. God was with Joseph and made everything that he did succeed. Reflect on an impossible situation in your life where God showed up and made himself known.

Joseph was put in the situations we've reviewed this week because of his faith in God and to fulfill God's ultimate plan for his life. Do you have a personal relationship with God that will allow you to succeed wherever you land, like Joseph? If you don't and would like to know more, reach out to a Christian friend, a small group leader, or a pastor today.

Portions of this study were adapted from The Gospel Project Chronological: The Story Begins, Vol. 1, Adult Personal Study Guide ESV (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2015). Used by permission.

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